



"Issues facing colleges" - An Association of Colleges (AoC) survey in partnership with TES, April 2017  
Summary tables

Type	Number of responses	Number of Colleges in England	Percent within type	Percentage of total responses in England
General Further Education College	74	203	36%	73%
Sixth Form College	20	88	23%	20%
Specialist College	7	26	27%	7%
<b>Total colleges in England</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Region	Number of responses	Number of Colleges in region	Percent within region	Percentage of total responses in England
Eastern region	12	33	36%	12%
East Midlands	7	20	35%	7%
Greater London	8	46	17%	8%
North East	9	19	47%	9%
North West	17	52	33%	17%
South East	15	57	26%	15%
South West	11	24	46%	11%
West Midlands	9	34	26%	9%
Yorkshire and the Humber	13	32	41%	13%
<b>Total colleges in England</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>100%</b>

4. Which of the following THREE issues are of most concern to your college? (Please tick and rank the top THREE (with one being the issue of most concern))	Number of responses	Percent	Rank 1 (Main concern)	Rank 2	Rank 3	Percent Rank 1 (Main concern)	Percent Rank 2	Percent Rank 3
Uncertainty about institutional funding levels	74	73%	53	15	6	52%	15%	6%
Capital funding	16	16%	4	6	6	4%	6%	6%
Heavy workload of college staff	15	15%	1	7	7	1%	7%	7%
Skills devolution	8	8%	2	1	5	2%	1%	5%
Pressures caused by GCSE English and maths resits	39	39%	8	17	14	8%	17%	14%
Mental ill-health increasing among students	11	11%	0	2	9	0%	2%	9%
Apprenticeship reforms	44	44%	14	21	9	14%	21%	9%
Inspections	16	16%	5	6	5	5%	6%	5%
Difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified teaching staff	27	27%	4	11	12	4%	11%	12%
Staff pay	21	21%	4	6	11	4%	6%	11%
Succession planning for senior management team	6	6%	0	4	2	0%	4%	2%
The status of technical and professional training among parents and students	12	12%	3	2	7	3%	2%	7%
Implementing the reforms of the Post-16 Skills Plan	14	14%	3	3	8	3%	3%	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>							

<b>5. What level of access is your college currently given to school pupils to inform them about the education and training pathways on offer in the further education sector?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Comprehensive access to most students	11	11%
Mixed access, depending on the school in question	69	68%
Limited access in most local schools	21	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>6. How easy is it to secure work placements for your students?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very easy	1	1%
Fairly easy	24	24%
Fairly difficult	63	64%
Very difficult	10	10%
Don't know	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>8. What has been the overall impact of the apprenticeship reforms on your colleges apprenticeship offer? (Where 1 is entirely negative, 5 is no impact and 10 is completely positive)</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0 (completely negative impact)	5	5%
1	4	4%
2	5	5%
3	13	14%
4	10	10%
5 (no impact)	23	24%
6	12	13%
7	14	15%
8	9	9%
9	1	1%
10 (completely positive impact)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>4.8</b>	

<b>9. How will the number of apprenticeships your college plans to offer in 2017/18 compare with 2016/17?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Increase	48	48%
About the same	22	22%
Decrease	11	11%
Don't know	7	7%
College does not offer apprenticeships	12	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

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10. What barriers, if any, are there to your college creating more apprenticeships? (Please tick all that apply)	Number of responses	Percent
No barriers	3	3%
People not knowing enough about apprenticeships	47	50%
Potential future apprentices	25	27%
Not enough employers prepared to offer apprenticeships	41	44%
Insufficient suitable candidates	52	55%
Poor levels of pay	22	23%
Uncertainty about government funding levels	50	53%
Other	34	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	

11. How confident are you in each of the following elements of apprenticeship reform:	Very confident	Fairly confident	Fairly unconfident	Not at all confident	Don't know	Number of responses
Funding levels	4	32	26	28	4	94
The Digital Apprenticeship Service	2	29	36	18	10	95
Register of apprenticeship training providers	14	37	15	21	8	95
End point assessment	1	17	30	40	7	95
Employer engagement	13	43	23	8	8	95
	Very confident	Fairly confident	Fairly unconfident	Not at all confident	Don't know	Number of responses
Funding levels	4%	34%	28%	30%	4%	100%
The Digital Apprenticeship Service	2%	31%	38%	19%	11%	100%
Register of apprenticeship training providers	15%	39%	16%	22%	8%	100%
End point assessment	1%	18%	32%	42%	7%	100%
Employer engagement	14%	45%	24%	8%	8%	100%

12. Does your college have a validating arrangement to offer higher education provision accredited by a partner university or universities?	Number of responses	Percent
Yes	81	80%
No	20	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100%</b>

13. If 'Yes' to Q12, how satisfied are you with the service you receive from your main validating university?	Number of responses	Percent
Very satisfied	19	23%
Fairly satisfied	41	51%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	12%
Fairly dissatisfied	9	11%
Very dissatisfied	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>14. Would it be beneficial to your college if it had its own validating powers for higher education provision?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	62	67%
No	23	25%
Don't know	8	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>15. How has the number of international students recruited by the college changed in 2016/17 compared with 2015/16?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Increased	8	8%
About the same	18	18%
Decreased	16	16%
Don't know	1	1%
College does not recruit internationally	57	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>16. How do you expect the number of international students recruited at your college to change in 2017/18 compared with 2016/17?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Increase	9	9%
Stay about the same	19	19%
Decrease	16	16%
Don't know	1	1%
College does not recruit internationally	55	55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>17. Does your college offer A Levels?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	60	59%
No	41	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>18. If 'Yes' to Q17, have you had to cancel any A Level courses in the past year?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	36	60%
No	24	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

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19. If you have had to cancel any A Level courses in the past year, please indicate in which subjects*: (Please tick all that apply)	Number of responses	Percent
German	7	21%
Accounting	5	15%
Dance	5	15%
Music	5	15%
Other	5	15%
Anthropology	4	12%
Creative Writing	4	12%
Critical Thinking	4	12%
Drama and Theatre Studies	4	12%
French	4	12%
Spanish	4	12%
Archaeology	3	9%
Biology	3	9%
Chemistry	3	9%
Classical Civilisation	3	9%
General Studies	3	9%
Information and Communication Technology	3	9%
Physical Education	3	9%
Physics	3	9%
Religious Studies	3	9%
Communication Studies	2	6%
Film Studies	2	6%
History	2	6%
Performing Arts	2	6%
World Development	2	6%
Applied Business	1	3%
Applied ICT	1	3%
Art & Design	1	3%
Business Studies	1	3%
Classics	1	3%
Communication and Culture	1	3%
Computing	1	3%
Economics	1	3%
English Language & Literature	1	3%
Environmental Studies	1	3%
Geology	1	3%
Government & Politics	1	3%
History of Art	1	3%
Human Biology	1	3%
Music Technology	1	3%
Performance Studies	1	3%
Science in Society	1	3%
Statistics	1	3%
Urdu	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	

\* survey included full list of A-Level subjects, have removed any with no cancellations

20. If you have had to cancel any A Level courses in the past year, please indicate the main reason why:	Number of responses	Percent
No funding	3	9%
No demand	17	50%
Not enough staff / staffing issues	2	6%
Other	11	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>21. In response to the number of students re-taking GCSE English and maths last year, are you planning any of the following courses of action for the 2017 exams? (Please tick all that apply)</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Hiring external venues for students to sit exams	19	23%
Rescheduling college timetables	67	82%
Hiring short-term staff to cope with the additional workload	54	66%
Other	12	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	

<b>22. During the last 12 months, have you found it difficult to recruit teaching staff in the following areas? (Please tick one box in each row)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
English	57	37	94
Maths	71	27	98
Other	60		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
English	61%	39%	100%
Maths	72%	28%	100%
Other			

<b>23. Is your college interested in creating or becoming an Institute of Technology?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	55	54%
No	18	18%
Too early to say	28	28%
Don't know	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>24. If you are a sixth form college, what is your college's position with regards to academy conversion?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Already converted	1	5%
In the process of converting	3	15%
Have expressed a formal interest in converting	4	20%
Considering converting	2	10%
Not interested in converting	10	50%
Don't know	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>25. Do you believe the devolution agenda will lead to improved provision of skills relevant to the employment market in your region?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	3	3%
No	41	41%
Too early to say	52	52%
Don't know	4	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

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<b>28. For 2016/17 and 2017/18, has your college set a budget to operate at a surplus, break even or operate at a deficit? (Please tick one box in each row)</b>	<b>Operate at a surplus</b>	<b>Break even</b>	<b>Operate at a deficit</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
2016/17	54	18	29	101
2017/18	61	25	13	99
	<b>Operate at a surplus</b>	<b>Break even</b>	<b>Operate at a deficit</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
2016/17	53%	18%	29%	100%
2017/18	62%	25%	13%	100%

<b>29. Do you anticipate that your college will be changing the size and structure of its workforce in the next 12 months? (Please tick all that are likely to apply)</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Nothing planned yet	15	15%
Increase size of workforce through recruitment drives	8	8%
Increase size of workforce through mergers	13	13%
Increase size of workforce through TUPE	1	1%
Restructure(s)	54	56%
Recruitment freeze	17	18%
Enforcing a gap between leavers and new starters	12	12%
Reducing working hours (by agreement with staff)	14	14%
Seeking applications for voluntary redundancies	34	35%
Compulsory redundancies	31	32%
Uncertain at this stage due to Area Reviews	8	8%
Other	18	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	

<b>30. Is youth social action part of the culture and practice at your college?</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes - all college departments support students to participate	47	47%
Yes - over half college departments support students to participate	21	21%
Yes - under half college departments support students to participate	14	14%
Yes - only a single college department supports students to participate	1	1%
No - we'd like to do more, but we don't know how	3	3%
No - we'd like to do more, but the education system doesn't recognise the value it adds	5	5%
No - it's not something we'd thought about doing	1	1%
No - we don't think it would add value to our students and wider community	0	0%
No - for other reasons (please specify)	4	4%
Don't know	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100%</b>